March 13, 2018

Regarding: **Opposition to HB 5447**: AAC Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Auditors of Public Accounts Concerning Private Providers of Special Education

Dear Representative Fleishmann, Senator Slossberg, Senator Boucher and Members of the Education Committee:

I am writing today to express my opposition to HB 5447. I have worked with children with disabilities in four different states for over 20 years. This bill proposes initiatives that seek to significantly limit the funding needed to serve children with special needs who often cannot advocate for themselves. Public schools choose to send the most significantly impacted students to private providers often because they are not capable of providing the intensive services these children desperately need to move forward. Private providers painstakingly create the necessary structures to provide appropriate educational supports for these children. This requires time, but moreover, an investment in specific expertise, intensity, and rigor. Comprehensive individualization is not only necessary, it should be required to serve the most challenged and at risk children.

If funding is limited in the way this bill proposes, staffing will be severely impacted, leaving these children with basic care at best. The necessary expertise and staff support is obviously warranted, but also required to deliver the appropriate level of service.

Please do not move this bill forward.

Sincerely yours,

Cresse Morrell M.S., BCBA 31 Noble Avenue Milford, CT 06460